

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEVADA

* * *

ANTONIO M. THOMAS,

Plaintiff,

v.

WASHOE COUNTY JAIL,

Defendant.

Case No. 3:23-cv-00381-MMD-CSD

ORDER

I. SUMMARY

Plaintiff Antonio M. Thomas brings this civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 to redress constitutional violations that he claims he suffered while incarcerated at Washoe County Jail. (ECF No. 10.) On March 28, 2024, this Court ordered Thomas to file an amended complaint by April 27, 2024. (ECF No. 9.) The Court warned Thomas that the action could be dismissed if he failed to file an amended complaint by that deadline. (*Id.* at 8.) That deadline expired and Thomas did not file an amended complaint, move for an extension, or otherwise respond.

II. DISCUSSION

District courts have the inherent power to control their dockets and “[i]n the exercise of that power, they may impose sanctions including, where appropriate . . . dismissal” of a case. *Thompson v. Hous. Auth. of City of Los Angeles*, 782 F.2d 829, 831 (9th Cir. 1986). A court may dismiss an action based on a party’s failure to obey a court order or comply with local rules. See *Carey v. King*, 856 F.2d 1439, 1440-41 (9th Cir. 1988) (affirming dismissal for failure to comply with local rule requiring *pro se* plaintiffs to keep court apprised of address); *Malone v. U.S. Postal Serv.*, 833 F.2d 128, 130 (9th Cir. 1987) (dismissal for failure to comply with court order). In determining whether to dismiss an action on one of these grounds, the Court must consider: (1) the public’s interest in

1 expeditious resolution of litigation; (2) the Court's need to manage its docket; (3) the risk
2 of prejudice to the defendants; (4) the public policy favoring disposition of cases on their
3 merits; and (5) the availability of less drastic alternatives. *See In re Phenylpropanolamine*
4 *Prod. Liab. Litig.*, 460 F.3d 1217, 1226 (9th Cir. 2006) (quoting *Malone*, 833 F.2d at 130).

5 The first two factors, the public's interest in expeditiously resolving this litigation
6 and the Court's interest in managing its docket, weigh in favor of dismissal of Thomas's
7 claims. The third factor, risk of prejudice to defendants, also weighs in favor of dismissal
8 because a presumption of injury arises from the occurrence of unreasonable delay in filing
9 a pleading ordered by the court or prosecuting an action. *See Anderson v. Air West*, 542
10 F.2d 522, 524 (9th Cir. 1976). The fourth factor—the public policy favoring disposition of
11 cases on their merits—is greatly outweighed by the factors favoring dismissal.

12 The fifth factor requires the Court to consider whether less drastic alternatives can
13 be used to correct the party's failure that brought about the Court's need to consider
14 dismissal. *See Yourish v. Cal. Amplifier*, 191 F.3d 983, 992 (9th Cir. 1999) (explaining
15 that considering less drastic alternatives *before* the party has disobeyed a court order
16 does not satisfy this factor); *accord Pagtalunan v. Galaza*, 291 F.3d 639, 643 & n.4 (9th
17 Cir. 2002) (explaining that “the persuasive force of” earlier Ninth Circuit cases that
18 “implicitly accepted pursuit of less drastic alternatives prior to disobedience of the court's
19 order as satisfying this element[,]” *i.e.*, like the “initial granting of leave to amend coupled
20 with the warning of dismissal for failure to comply[,]” have been “eroded” by *Yourish*).
21 Courts “need not exhaust every sanction short of dismissal before finally dismissing a
22 case, but must explore possible and meaningful alternatives.” *Henderson v. Duncan*, 779
23 F.2d 1421, 1424 (9th Cir. 1986). Because this action cannot realistically proceed until and
24 unless Thomas files an amended complaint, the only alternative is to enter a second order
25 setting another deadline. But the reality of repeating an ignored order is that it often only
26 delays the inevitable and squanders the Court's finite resources. The circumstances here
27 do not indicate that this case will be an exception: there is no hint that Thomas needs
28 additional time or evidence that he did not receive the Court's screening order. Setting


1 another deadline is not a meaningful alternative given these circumstances. So the fifth
2 factor favors dismissal.

3 **III. CONCLUSION**

4 Having thoroughly considered these dismissal factors, the Court finds that they
5 weigh in favor of dismissal. It is therefore ordered that this action is dismissed without
6 prejudice based on Thomas's failure to file an amended complaint in compliance with this
7 Court's Mach 28, 2024, order. The Clerk of Court is directed to enter judgment accordingly
8 and close this case. No other documents may be filed in this now-closed case. If Thomas
9 wishes to pursue his claims, he must file a complaint in a new case.

10 It is further ordered that Thomas's application to proceed *in forma pauperis* (ECF
11 No. 1) is denied as moot.

12 DATED THIS 13th day of May 2024.

13
14 
15 _____
16 MIRANDA M. DU
17 CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28